



ROCK OF AGES
Other foundation can
no man lay -
A RANSOM FOR ALL

"Watchman, What of the Night?
The Morning Cometh, and a Night also!"—Isaiah

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"I will stand upon my watch and will set my foot
upon the Tower, and will watch to see what He will
say unto me, and what answer I shall make to them
that oppose me."—Habakkuk 2: 1.

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Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves (the restless, discontented) roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking to the things coming upon the earth (society); for the powers of the heavens (ecclesiasticism) shall be shaken. . . . When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then know that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Look up, lift up your heads, rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh.—Matt. 24:33; Mark 13:29; Luke 21:25-31.

THIS JOURNAL AND ITS SACRED MISSION

This Journal is one of the prime factors or instruments in the system of Bible instruction, or "Seminary Extension", now being presented in all parts of the civilized world by the WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY, chartered A.D. 1884, "For the Promotion of Christian Knowledge". It not only serves as a class room where Bible students may meet in the study of the divine Word but also as a channel of communication through which they may be reached with announcements of the Society's conventions and of the coming of its traveling representatives, styled "Pilgrims", and refreshed with reports of its conventions.

Our "Berean Lessons" are topical rehearsals or reviews of our Society's published STUDIES most entertainingly arranged, and very helpful to all who would merit the only honorary degree which the Society accords, viz., *Verbi Dei Minister* (V. D. M.), which translated into English is *Minister of God's Word*. Our treatment of the International Sunday School Lessons is specially for the older Bible students and teachers. By some this feature is considered indispensable.

This journal stands firmly for the defense of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated—redemption through the precious blood of "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all". (1 Peter 1:19; 1 Timothy 2:6) Building up on this sure foundation the gold, silver and precious stones (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Peter 1:5-11) of the Word of God, its further mission is to "make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which . . . has been hid in God, . . . to the intent that now might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God"—"which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed".—Ephesians 3:5-9, 10.

It stands free from all parties, sects and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken—according to the divine wisdom granted unto us to understand his utterances. Its attitude is not dogmatic, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust, to be used only in his service; hence our decisions relative to what may and what may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of his good pleasure, the teaching of his Word, for the upbuilding of his people in grace and knowledge. And we not only invite but urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word to which reference is constantly made to facilitate such testing.

TO US THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH

That the church is "the temple of the living God", peculiarly "his workmanship"; that its construction has been in progress throughout the gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the Chief Corner Stone of his temple, through which, when finished, God's blessing shall come "to all people", and they find access to him.—1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:20-22; Genesis 28:14; Galatians 3:29.

That meantime the chiseling, shaping, and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin, progresses; and when the last of these "living stones", "elect and precious," shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Revelation 15:5-8.

That the basis of hope, for the church and the world, lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," "a ransom for all," and will be "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world", "in due time".—Hebrews 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

That the hope of the church is that she may be like her Lord, "see him as he is," be "partakers of the divine nature," and share his glory as his joint-heir.—1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4.

That the present mission of the church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next age.—Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 1:6; 20:6.

That the hope for the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's Millennial kingdom, the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church, when all the wilfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isaiah 35.

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Terms to the Lord's Poor: All Bible students who, by reason of old age or other infirmity or adversity, are unable to pay for this journal, will be supplied free if they send a postal card each May stating their case and requesting such provision. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list continually and in touch with the Berean studies.

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MEMORIAL DATE

For the year 1925 Wednesday, April 8, after 6 o'clock p. m., is the proper time for the celebration of the Memorial of our Lord's death. All the ecclesias will please take notice. We hope this may be a season of great refreshing to the Lord's people. Kindly send your reports in immediately after the Memorial, giving the number partaking.

WORLD-WIDE WITNESS

It is deemed advisable to notify the classes as far in advance as possible of the dates for world-wide witness for 1925. Below are given the dates and subjects assigned for each date. We ask the dear friends everywhere on earth to make arrangements for a public witness on the dates mentioned, using the subjects as set forth below. Select good halls, advertise the meeting well, and have your best speakers. May the Lord's blessings be upon this effort to advertise the King and his kingdom.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| March 22: | "GOD'S KINGDOM HAS COME—
Millions Now Living Will Never Die" |
| April 26: | "TIME OF DELIVERANCE—
Millions Now Living Will Never Die" |
| May 31: | "THE WORLD SHALL BE ESTABLISHED—
Millions Now Living Will Never Die" |
| June 21: | "A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE—
Millions Now Living Will Never Die" |
| August 9: | "MESSENGERS OF PEACE—
Millions Now Living Will Never Die" |
| September 13: | "THE YEAR OF JUBILEE—
Millions Now Living Will Never Die" |
| October 11: | "THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS—
Millions Now Living Will Never Die" |

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THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

YEARS ago a company in California sank a shaft on a gold claim. After going down a considerable depth, the company became financially embarrassed and abandoned the claim. Later another company took it over, sank the shaft a little deeper, found gold in abundance, and sold the claim for over \$5,000,000. Pretty good for an abandoned mine! We wonder how the first owners felt.

²The Bible has long been considered as a mine of knowledge. Many theologians have worked it more or less, and have secured considerable historical and other information; but most of the denominational companies have now become theologically embarrassed and have abandoned the Bible.

³But zealous Bible Students have taken over the mine, and are sinking the shaft of investigation still deeper and finding rich deposits of valuable information. The apostle Paul in Romans 15:4 says: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." In his first letter to the Corinthians (10:11) he writes: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [types]: and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." God's dealings with the children of Israel were typical or illustrative of things to come; and God had a record of them carefully made and preserved all these centuries, though hidden beneath the debris of the dark ages. God intended them for special use, and for the blessing of his people at the close of the Gospel Age.

LAW OF THE JUBILEE

"The Apostle states positively that the Mosaic Law and the national experiences of the Jewish people were types of "better things to come". The prophet Daniel, describing the time of the end, prophesied: "But the wise shall understand." This knowledge is a part of the "helmet", to protect the head.—Ephesians 6:17.

⁵One of the prominent laws given to the Israelites is recorded in Leviticus 25:1-13, and is known as the Law of the Jubilee. We quote in part from the Rotherham translation: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,—Speak unto the sons of Israel,

and thou shalt say unto them:—When ye enter into the land which I am giving you then shall the land keep a sabbath unto Jehovah. Six years shalt thou sow thy field, and six years shalt thou prune thy vineyard, and gather the increase thereof; but in the seventh year—a sabbath of sacred rest shall there be unto the land, a sabbath unto Jehovah; thy field shalt thou not sow, and thy vineyard shalt thou not prune; that which groweth of itself in the harvest shalt thou not reap; and the grapes of thy unpruned vines shalt thou not cut off: a year of sacred rest shall there be to the land. So shall the sabbath of the land be unto you for food: unto thee and unto thy servant and unto thy handmaid, and unto thy hireling and unto thy settlers that are sojourning with thee; and unto thy tame-beasts and unto thy wild-beasts that are in thy land shall belong all the increase thereof for food.

⁶"And thou shalt count to thee seven weeks of years, seven years seven times,—so shall the days of the seven weeks of years become to thee forty-nine years. Then shalt thou cause a signal-horn to pass through in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month: on the Day of Propitiation shall ye cause a horn to pass throughout all your land. So shall ye hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim freedom throughout the land to all the dwellers thereof,—a jubilee shall it be unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and every man unto his family shall ye return. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you,—ye shall not sow, neither shall ye reap the self-grown corn thereof, nor cut off the grapes of the unpruned vines thereof. For a jubilee it is, holy shall it be unto you,—out of the field shall ye eat her increase. In this same jubilee year shall ye return every man unto his possession."

⁷In other words, every fiftieth year was to be a year of re-adjustment and straightening out the more or less tangled affairs of the previous forty-nine years, and a restitution for all to liberty and former possessions. The purpose of the law was that every fifty-first year the entire nation should start again free and equal—no Jew in the service of another, and no inheritance in the possession of another. Jehovah said that the land was his; and they were privileged to enjoy occupation only by his favor.

⁸The penalty for disobedience to this law was severe, as recorded in Leviticus 26:32-35. We again quote from Rotherham: "And I will make the land dumb, and your foes that dwell therein shall regard it with dumb amazement: When even you I scatter among the nations, and make bare after you a sword, then shall your land become an astonishment, and your cities become a desolation."

⁹"Then shall the land *be paid* her sabbaths all the days she lieth desolate, while ye are in the land of your foes,—then shall the land keep sabbath, and *pay off* her sabbaths: All the days she lieth desolate shall she keep sabbath,—the which she kept not as your sabbaths, while ye dwelt thereupon."

¹⁰We have no record that Jehovah informed Moses that this law was to be a type, or that he intimated how long the Jews were to keep it; but from Jeremiah 25: 11, 12, and 29: 10, also from Daniel 9: 2, we have the information that God intended the type to continue for seventy jubilee periods.

¹¹If the jubilees were only types there must come a time when they would cease, in order that the antitype might begin. It is necessary, therefore, for the earnest student to note carefully the chronological data recorded, as it also must be for his information; otherwise it would not have been recorded. This is now easily ascertained. Seventy jubilees of fifty years each make a total of 3500 years. The children of Israel entered Canaan in the Spring of 1575 B. C. From a total of 3500 take 1575 as B. C. years, and the balance is 1925 for the A. D. date. If the Jews had remained faithful to their covenant, the year 1925 A. D., commencing in the Fall of 1924 and ending the following Fall, would have been their last typical jubilee.

¹²The Israelites entered Canaan at Passover time, in the Spring of the year. They were to begin that year to count for the jubilee. The Passover was associated with the first-borns particularly, who typified the Church of the Gospel Age. The first-borns were later exchanged for the tribe of Levi, who had no possessions in the land. (Numbers 3: 11, 12; 18: 24) The Spring of the year was also to be the beginning of the year for the Jews, to separate them from surrounding nations, who began the year in the Fall, as the Jews also had previously done.

¹³But the Law also recognized a fiscal year which began with the Day of Atonement in the Fall, just the opposite time of the year from the Passover. The Atonement Day sacrifices were for all Israel, and not for the first-borns particularly. The Law of the Jubilee was specially a type of restitution for all the world; and therefore it was very appropriate that the jubilee trumpets should be sounded in connection with the Atonement Day services, on the tenth day of the seventh month, approximately our October 1st to 10th.

¹⁴The Jews were to begin to count the year when they entered the land; hence the first Atonement Day would

be only six months after they entered. This would count as their first, and a year from that Fall would be the second, and so on. Actually, then, the first year would be but six months long; but thereafter each year would be full, from Atonement Day to Atonement Day. The year beginning thus in the Fall has been termed the civil year, to distinguish it from the ecclesiastical year, which began in the Spring. In Palestine the sowing time is in the Fall, and the harvest in the Spring. The first fruits of Pentecost were fifty days after the Passover. There is no Scriptural reason to believe that the jubilee year began in the Spring, six months after the blowing of the trumpets on the Day of Atonement; but that it began immediately after the blowing of the trumpets, in the Fall.

IF THE JEWS WERE IN PALESTINE

¹⁵What, therefore, would we reasonably expect to transpire among the Jews during 1925 if they were still in Palestine, and had remained faithful for all these 3500 years? Commencing approximately about the 10th of October, 1924, the priests and the Levites would have sounded the trumpets of Jubilee throughout all Judea, announcing that another cycle of forty-nine years had ended, that the time of restoration had come, and that all Jewish slaves were to be freed and all property rights restored. All Jews living outside of Palestine would hasten back to claim their rights. The Gentiles would not have been particularly interested. Possibly some of them might have been told that great blessings would come to them as soon as this jubilee year closed; but as the Gentiles have been without a God for 6000 years they would have little or no faith in such reports. They would be too much interested in their own schemes, and would probably think the Jews presumptuous to claim that the God of the universe would use the little nation of Israel as a channel of blessing to the great and mighty nations of the world.

¹⁶However, as the Jews had done their best to keep the laws of God, no doubt they would have been glad and anxious to carry the message of favor to the Gentiles as soon as they received instructions to do so.

HAS GOD CHANGED HIS SCHEDULE?

¹⁷But the Jews as a nation are not in their land, and cannot keep 1925 as a jubilee. Has God, therefore, changed his time schedule for the antitypical jubilee? We find no scripture implying that he has. On the contrary, the physical facts about us, viewed in the light of prophecy, indicate that he is carrying out his original plan exactly on time. What, therefore, may we reasonably expect for 1925 and the years immediately following?

¹⁸As noted above in the Rotherham rendering of Leviticus 25: 34, the implication of the original text is that God placed a mortgage, so to speak, of seventy sabbath rest-years upon the land, which he said was

his. (Leviticus 25:33) This mortgage was the price of their rental or residence upon the land, and a payment of one year was to be made every fifty years.

¹⁹As the land could not be released until the mortgage had been fully paid, and the Jews have not been in position to make a payment for nearly two thousand years, how can we say that the type could not cease until the antitype begins? The answer is in the text quoted; viz., Leviticus 26:34, 35. God collected the entire debt of seventy rest-years for the land all at one time, and not on the instalment plan as first arranged.

²⁰God sent Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as his officer to demand payment. Full record is found in 2 Chronicles 36:17-21. We quote again from Rotherham: "So he [God] brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans . . . and all delivered he into his hand. And all the utensils of the house of God both great and small, and the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and the treasures of the king and of his rulers, the whole carried he [Nebuchadnezzar] to Babylon; and they [the Chaldeans] burned the house of God, and threw down the wall of Jerusalem,—and all the palaces thereof burned they with fire, and all the precious vessels thereof he destroyed; and he exiled the remnant left from the sword into Babylon,—where they became his and his sons as servants, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: to fulfil the word of God by the mouth of Jeremiah *until the land had paid off her sabbaths*—all the days of her lying desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil seventy years." The full seventy rest-years, demanded by the Law, had been collected whether the Jews had kept their part or not.

²¹In this connection the following comment by Josephus is interesting:

"For the people of the ten tribes were carried out of Samaria by the Assyrians, in the days of king Hoshea. After which the people of the two tribes, that remained after Jerusalem was taken, were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and Chaldea. Now as to Shalmaneser, he removed the Israelites out of their country, and placed therein the nation of the Cutheans, who had formerly belonged to the interior of Persia and Media; but were then called Samaritans, by taking the name of the country to which they were removed. But the king of Babylon, who brought out the two tribes, placed no other nation in their country. By which means all Judea, and Jerusalem, and the temple, continued to be a desert for seventy years."—"Antiquities," Book 10, Chapter 9.

DATE PAYMENT WAS DEMANDED

²²Although Nebuchadnezzar had besieged the city for eighteen months, it was not until about July 9, 606 B. C. (Jeremiah 39:2; 52:6, 12-14) that Jerusalem was taken. It might properly be said it was then that the officer served the papers upon the delinquent debtor. By about August 10 (2 Kings 25:8) the city was com-

pletely destroyed, and the nation taken captive to Babylon; and Jerusalem and Judea were left "without inhabitants" (Jeremiah 44:6), as foretold, with the exception of a few of the very poor, who were permitted to remain under Gedaliah as governor. However, he was soon killed; and the rest became so frightened that they fled to Egypt by the seventh month.—Jeremiah 41.

²³When the debt to the land had been fully collected, God fulfilled his promise and opened the way for his people to return to their own land. Cyrus, king of Persia, was God's officer for that work. In the first year of Cyrus, 536 B. C., he issued a royal edict permitting all the Jews in Babylon to return to Judea and rebuild their Temple at Jerusalem. About fifty thousand returned, under the leadership of Zerubbabel.

²⁴The exact time of the year that this company left Babylon and arrived in Judea is not definitely stated; but the climatic conditions of Babylonia would prevent a start much if any earlier than the first month of the Jewish year, or approximately April first. It would take at least four months to make the long journey with their families and herds. Sixty-eight years later another company, under the leadership of Ezra, made the same journey. Doubtless they had similar experiences. They left Babylon about the first of April, and arrived at Jerusalem the first day of the fifth month, four months later, about August first. (Ezra 7:8, 9) The first Jewish month corresponds to our April, their second to May, the third to June, the fourth to July, and the fifth to August. The first company under Zerubbabel, in 536 B. C. must have made practically the same time, and reached Judea about the last of July or the first of August.

²⁵On reaching home the Jews found their land still desolate, their cities uninhabited, and their houses vacant. These had remained desolate for the full seventy years. It would take some time to clean their houses and to make them fit for habitation, and to repair the walls of their cities; yet they were soon so well settled that "the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities." "And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves as one man to Jerusalem." (Ezra 2:70; 3:1) Jerusalem was in ruins, but they met there to offer the Atonement Day sacrifices as demanded by the Law.—Leviticus 16:29-31.

²⁶This is very strong evidence that they must have reached Judea by the last of July or the first of August. They were taken from their land July-August 606 B. C., and were returned to it in July-August 536 B. C., closing exactly the seventy years desolation, rest or sabbath debt on the land demanded by the Law; no more, no less. This is another witness to the accuracy of God's time schedules. If the time features in the

type were so clearly marked, at both the beginning and the end, is it not reasonable to expect the beginning of the antitype, the great jubilee, to be as clearly marked?

"SEVEN TIMES" COMMENCED JULY-AUGUST, 606 B. C.

²⁷The punishment for not properly observing the jubilee was a severe one, yet in Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24 and 28 mention is made of "seven times" more punishment if the Jews neglected to keep their Law, as they had covenanted. By the key given in other scriptures, Bible Students have long known that the "seven times" refer to seven symbolic or prophetic years of three hundred and sixty days, each day standing for a full year of actual time. Thus seven times would be 7×360 , or 2520 years. In Luke 21:24 Jesus stated that Jerusalem, standing for the Jewish nation, would be trodden down, or under the dominion of the Gentiles, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The nation went completely under the dominion of the Gentiles at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar July-August, 606 B. C. 2520 years from that date would be 1914 A. D. As early as 1876 and 1877 the Bible was shown to have foretold 1914 as the close of the times of the Gentiles. Many Bible Students heralded 1914 as the end of the world; not the destruction of the earth, but the end of the age, or dominion of the Gentiles.

²⁸Many can remember that as early as 1890 there were rumors of a great European war. The nations began to prepare for war. But year by year war was delayed, until it began to be generally believed that one could never come. It has been stated that Germany was preparing for and expecting a war in 1912. But 1912 passed, and no world war came. Many remarked that war had been restrained as if by some unseen power; and that was true. Suddenly, almost as a thunderclap from a clear sky, July 28th, 1914, Austria declared war against little Serbia. Within two days Russia, in order to protect her protégé, Serbia, declared war against Austria. Germany immediately joined Austria against Russia. England and France hastened to assist Russia. So suddenly were the dogs of war unleashed that by the fifth of August all the principal nations of Europe were in deadly conflict; and the work of dispossession of the Gentiles began.

WHY THE JULY-AUGUST DATE?

²⁹We see now why Germany could not begin the World War in 1912. It was not God's time. The times of the Gentiles had not fully expired, and God would be as accurate with the Gentiles as he had been in regard to the seventy years of desolation. It is in line with this that the taking of the rulership from the Gentiles was delayed until the July-August season of the year. It was July-August, 606 B. C., that the Gentiles gained complete control of the world; and exactly on time, 2520 years later, even to the month of the year, the dispossession work began. In the latter

case God permitted the wrath of the nations against each other to act as his agency for their eviction.

SCRIPTURAL NUMBER TEN

³⁰The number ten is often used in the Scriptures, and apparently there is some peculiar significance attached to it. There were ten virgins, ten servants, ten pounds, ten talents, ten kings, ten crowns, ten horns, etc., implying the thought of entirety or completeness or to an end. The same is doubtless true in regard to ten years.

³¹Ten years from 1914 is 1924. If the Jews were in their homeland we would have expected the blowing of the typical jubilee trumpets to begin about October 1st, 1924, announcing the year 1925 as the jubilee. When God demanded payment of the debt, he presented the demand in July-August instead of October. The debt was considered as fully paid by July-August season of the year. The same time of the year was specially marked by the beginning and end of the "Times of the Gentiles". Why should God so particularly mark that season of the year in connection with the typical jubilee unless it were to call special attention to it? We believe that he had that object in view, and that he has now made it manifest.

SCRIPTURAL NUMBER SEVEN

³²Bible Students know that the number seven often has peculiar significance in the Scriptures. Note the many times it is used in Revelation and in connection with the jubilee. It will be remembered by all associated with the work in 1916 that trouble began almost immediately following Brother Russell's death. However, it was not until the Seventh Volume came out that the trouble culminated. It was on the seventeenth of July, 1917, that "The Finished Mystery" was distributed to the Bethel Family; and it was on that day that trouble at Bethel came to a head, and continued until many who had been very active in the service for years withdrew from further activities in connection with the SOCIETY. July 17th, 1917, was therefore a marked date.

THE COLUMBUS CONVENTION

³³The International Bible Students have for years been calling attention to the Bible prophecies that this world (age) is passing away, that the great antitypical jubilee for the world is at hand, and that 1925 would be a marked year. The Association has held several general conventions recently—notably two at Cedar Point, Ohio, in 1919 and 1922. 1924 seemed a favorable year for another; and many friends were inquiring whether one could not be held in some central and convenient locality. Some were suggesting Cedar Point, as it was commodious and centrally located, and many pleasant associations were connected with it.

³⁴In response to these suggestions the matter was taken under consideration; and early in the year the

SOCIETY entered into communication with the management of the grounds with that end in view. Both previous conventions had been held in September, the week following Labor Day. The thought was to secure the same period; namely, September 2nd to 9th. We were surprised that, although we had applied in February, another Association already held an option on that week, and the management was unable to give us a date earlier than the week following, September 9th to 16th. This was late in the season, and would be inconvenient for many.

³⁵The reason why we applied for the September date was that Cedar Point usually closes the season with Labor Day each year, and the grounds and buildings are not sufficiently large to accommodate both their regular patrons and our convention at the same time. However, apparently we could do no better, and negotiations had proceeded so far that a contract had been drawn up late in March and waited only for a final decision. We had telegraphed to ascertain whether an earlier date was yet available.

³⁶In the meantime the Chamber of Commerce of Columbus, Ohio, had heard that the I. B. S. A. was intending to hold a general convention during the year. Through its chairman, Mr. H. B. Dickson, it sent us the following telegram:

Columbus, Ohio., March 28, 1924.

J. F. Rutherford, Care I. B. S. A., 124 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Columbus Convention Association invites International Bible Students hold general convention, Columbus, July 20-27 inclusive. Offer free of charge, hall, center city, 4000 capacity; Coliseum on exposition grounds, capacity 14,000; and other halls; also restaurant privileges and comfort stations on grounds. These grounds within six blocks University Stadium, capacity 65,000. Options held until April 1. Will be glad to welcome you.

(Signed) H. B. Dickson.

³⁷Within twenty minutes an answer was received from Cedar Point that no earlier date could be given. The offer by Columbus was preferable in many ways. The date July 20-27 would accommodate many teachers and students, who would be in school in September; also it was much more suitable for many farmers, who could leave their farms better in July. Columbus was also much more centrally situated and easily accessible by steam and trolley lines, and had far better accommodations for a large crowd. It seemed providential; and we accepted their invitation.

³⁸Nothing further than that noted above was thought of the date at that time. However, we began immediately arranging for a larger convention. The results have now become history. Doubtless it was one of the largest, if not the largest, religious convention for discussing purely Bible topics ever held. The attendance in person reached ten to twelve thousand altogether; and in addition, there were present in heart and

in spirit many thousands more whose prayers were daily ascending for the Lord's special blessing to rest upon that assembly of his people. In heart, mind and interest, all the Bible students in present truth were there.

³⁹To those who were privileged to be present in person it was manifest from the start that the blessing of the Lord rested upon them. The weather was ideal; the location and accommodations were excellent; and the attendance was daily increasing. There seemed to be on the part of all an air of expectancy that the Lord was about to pour out some special blessing.

⁴⁰On Friday morning, July 26th, the vast company of the Lord's people had been greatly refreshed by clearer elucidations of his Word. It was at the close of a stirring address that the President of our SOCIETY presented a resolution which he headed AN INDICTMENT, copy of which has appeared in the WATCH TOWER and in the public press, and moved its adoption by the convention. The motion was quickly seconded by a number of brethren, and was enthusiastically and unanimously adopted, with applause. It was almost immediately suggested that the resolution be used as volunteer literature and scattered far and wide. Great was the enthusiasm as the friends realized the force and truth of the Indictment. It was an arraignment against the Old World, stating in legal, Scriptural form that the rule of the Gentiles had failed, that they had been cast off forever from divine favor; and calling upon the people to accept the incoming Messianic kingdom.

⁴¹As noted above, the Committee on Arrangements for the Convention did not choose the date finally decided upon. It was set by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce. Not until close to convention time was it noticed first that the date for the public witness, July 27th, 1924, completed just *ten years to a day* from July 28th, 1914, when the great war started. The message for the public meeting in the Stadium was: "Civilization Doomed. The End of the Old is at Hand, the New is Coming in." What more fitting subject could have been chosen! That same Sunday morning, the 27th, a Brother gave a discourse before the Convention in the Coliseum on the subject, "The Year of Jubilee Has Come," calling attention to the Scriptural and historical evidences.

⁴²The public attendance at the Stadium was variously estimated at from 17,000 to 25,000, but that was probably but a small portion of those who could hear the lecture. By means of the radio broadcasting, hundreds of thousands, far and near, would be in position to hear as well as would those who were seated in the Stadium. The medium of the radio is as evidently of the Lord as a means of reaching the people as has been the printing press during the past. In addition to all those personally present, the newspapers carried full reports to many thousands more. There were also delegates from many foreign countries attending the convention,

waiting to carry the message to their native lands and send it broadcast throughout their own countries in their various languages. When a stone is thrown into the water, the ripples go on and on until they reach the distant shore. So this message of the kingdom will go forth by voice, tract, newspaper, and the radio until it shall have reached the ends of the earth.

PRESENT-DAY EVENTS PRE-DATED

⁴³Shall we say that all this is merely coincidental? There are too many evidences pointing to the fact that it is not: The indictment of the old order, "Civilization Doomed, the New Order is at Hand"; the announcement that the Year of Jubilee is Here, at exactly ten years to a day from the starting of the World War, which was the beginning of the dispossession of the Gentiles; and that date set by those who had no interest in Bible chronology, and the subject of the public proclamation not known at the time the date was accepted; the fact that the date fixed upon was the last of July, falling into line with the July-August season of the beginning and the end of the seventy years desolation, which had direct connection with the jubilee, and the beginning and the end of the times of the Gentiles.

⁴⁴In discussing the jubilees in Volume Two of *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* Brother Russell pointed out that the last typical jubilee should merge into the antitypical jubilee, and might, therefore, be properly considered as the beginning of the antitype. In the type, the year 1925 would have been confined to the natural Israelites. What would be more reasonable now than to expect that the year 1925 will be of special interest to the antitypical Israelites?

⁴⁵In the type the priests and Levites would have been very busy during the year, assisting their fellows and the people properly to settle their affairs and relationships in harmony with the Law and their inheritances. This would have been in preparation for the work commenced in 1926 for the Gentiles. If we have correctly interpreted the matter, 1926 is still the year for God's blessings to begin towards the Gentiles. What would be more reasonable than to expect that 1925 will be a very stirring and busy year for the antitypical Israelites, as God will be settling their arrangements and positions in the Body preparatory for their work to begin with the Gentiles on time? It would, therefore, seem reasonable to expect that 1925 will be one of severe testings upon the individual members of the antitypical Israelites. Whether this be the correct deduction or not, it is a fact that there are thousands of the friends passing through fiery trials, along nearly all lines, though not so much along doctrinal as heretofore, but physical, financial and family tests. These seem to have increased rapidly of late; and every member is apparently being placed on individual examination along the lines of brotherly love, faith, confidence, obedience to the commandments

of Christ, patient endurance, and standing fast for what we have attained, and against evil mental suggestions of all kinds. It is a fight to a finish. We see, then, that we have good reason to expect some manifestation of divine guidance, and evidence that we are in the right way, doing the right work at the right time.

⁴⁶Another interesting incident is in connection with the July-August date: As stated above, it was on July 17th, 1917, that the trouble at Bethel culminated. July 17th is almost exactly seven years prior to July 20th, when the Columbus Convention opened. The experiences of the Church during those seven years have been nothing short of miraculous. In July, 1917, it appeared to many that the work might be violently overthrown and the dark night set in. The darkness increased until the spring of 1919. Seven years from the date when the truth seemed to go under a cloud it is shining forth with greater brilliancy than was ever known before.

⁴⁷Some may be inclined to make light of all this. So were the people of Nazareth when Jesus said that the words of the prophet were being fulfilled before their eyes. To us it is a matter of rejoicing as we see these indications of God's care and interest in his people, and his overruling in their work; and we are stimulated to push on with greater zeal than ever before, assured that the Lord is still in direct charge, and that he is carrying on his work exactly on schedule time. It is not often that he calls the attention of his people to the fact while they are passing through some pre-dated experience. In the face of all the foregoing historical and physical facts, who shall say that the date of the Columbus Convention was not in the mind of Jehovah when he sent Nebuchadnezzar to foreclose the mortgage, July 606 B. C., 2530 years ago? Does it not also indicate, according to the dates above given, that the last chronological typical jubilee began in July, 1924, instead of October; and that the antitypical jubilee may begin about July-August, 1925? Would it be unreasonable to expect that Jehovah will mark that date to the world as clearly as he did the year 1914? and as clearly as he has marked the beginning of 1925 to the Church?

WHAT ABOUT 1926?

⁴⁸That 1925 will be a phenomenal year in many respects is evident.

⁴⁹The Catholics are celebrating their "jubilee", which began Christmas Eve, December 24th, 1924. The "jubilee door" of St. Peter's at Rome was opened by the Pope at that time, and is to remain open for one year. All who pass through the door are promised his special blessing. Rome is expecting hundreds of thousands to take advantage of this special favor, and is making great preparations to take care of the throngs which will visit the city during 1925.

⁵⁰The Jews also are looking upon 1925 and expect to receive some special blessing from Jehovah, though they do not seem to be certain what it may be. We do not know where they received their intimation, unless they have been reading some of our SOCIETY's literature. Nevertheless they are expectant. Various Protestant denominations are becoming worried over the loss of interest in religion on the part of their congregations, and are trying by various means to overcome it.

⁵¹It seems to be a weakness of many Bible Students that if they locate a future date in the Bible, immediately they center as many prophecies upon that date as possible. This has been the cause of many siftings in the past. As far as we recall, all the dates foreseen were correct. The difficulty was that the friends inflated their imaginations beyond reason; and that when their imaginations burst asunder, they were inclined to throw away everything. No doubt Mr. Miller was correct in locating 1844 as a Bible date. But he expected too much. 1874 was also easily located. 1878 was also a marked date, and one which caused Brother Russell a severe trial until he corrected his expectations, as noted in his "Harvest Siftings", of April, 1894, now out of print. Many can remember how "absolutely sure" some were about 1914. No doubt the Lord was pleased with the zeal manifested by his servants; but did they have a Scriptural basis for all they expected to come to pass that year? Let us be cautious, therefore, about predicting particulars. The Lord will make them clear as fast as they become meat in due season. However, we feel sure that he will not chide us if we earnestly and reverently search for what may be revealed, watching also the facts about us.

⁵²We may reasonably expect that 1925 will be a very active year for the saints on this side the veil; and also that the adversary will be increasingly active in his opposition, as he knows that his time is shortening. The world will be so engrossed with its own troubles that it will not have much time to think of other things, until people wake up to the facts that their schemes have been soap bubbles, and that the truth has been scattered all over the world. The adversary will be quick to suggest that the scattering of the truth has been the cause of their disappointments. This will anger them, and they may attempt strenuous measures to suppress it, in order to direct attention from themselves and to hold their power over the masses. How long before they attempt this we may not know, nor need it trouble us. Our Captain is in full control of the situation, and victory is sure.

⁵³No one needs "glasses" to see that the world—political, financial, religious, national, and international—is perplexed and anxious. No one may safely predict exactly what will take place, even within the next year; but God has given general indications in his Word of many things which are yet to come to pass. He has not

specified exactly their chronological order. Therefore let us first note some of the prophecies which are still unfulfilled.

⁵⁴Babylon is yet to be cast down, as a stone thrown into the sea. (Revelation 18:21) The battle of Armageddon is yet to be fought. (Revelation 16:16) The "time of trouble such as never was" has not come upon the earth. (Matthew 24:21, 22) The devil is yet to be bound and cast into prison. (Revelation 20:1-4) The last of the saints are to be changed. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) The Lamb is to come forth victorious. (Revelation 17:14) The ancient worthies are to be brought forth and made princes in all the earth. (Acts 7:5; Daniel 12:13; Hebrews 11:13; Psalm 45:16) Jacob is to have his time of trouble. (Ezekiel 38:14-23) All the prophecies relating to the Millennial Age are yet to be fulfilled.

BLESSING THROUGH THE JEWS

⁵⁵We know the work of restitution must come to the Jews first, and through them to the rest of the world. As the Scriptures state that Jerusalem is to be the capital of the world and that the ancient worthies are to be princes in all the earth, we are warranted in expecting that the kingdom work will begin at Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3; 27:13; Zechariah 14:17) Jerusalem will need a great deal of cleansing before it will be in condition to be the capital of the world. The city may be undergoing changes during all the Millennial Age, but it will take several years to do some necessary preliminary work.

⁵⁶According to prophecy we look for a season of great prosperity to come to Palestine, which will not extend to the Gentiles. It will be necessary for the Gentiles to make application for it, as stated in Isaiah 2:2-4. It will take time for some of the Gentiles to overcome their natural prejudices against the Jews and to humble themselves sufficiently to accept favors through them. They may need some of the severe experiences described in Zechariah 14:17-19, *R. V.*

⁵⁷Whether the blessings here referred to as rain are literal or not, they refer to something that represents God's favor. If literal rain be meant, it might take several years of drought before the Gentiles would attribute the lack of rain to their refusal to make application for God's blessings at the hands of the Israelites. All this will take more or less time.

⁵⁸In the past God's dealing has been with the Jew first and then with the Gentiles; and the prophecies state that this rule will continue to be his method. (Zechariah 8:20-23) As the Jews increase in the favor of God by accepting the ancient worthies as the representatives of Jehovah and by falling into line with his arrangements, disease and death will rapidly decrease and shortly cease altogether. The Jews will be going up the highway of holiness, physically as well as otherwise. These blessings to the Jews will be quickly

noticed by the Gentiles, and will create in them a desire for similar favors. It will be one of the means used by Jehovah to cause them to seek him. Possibly these are the blessings referred to as "rain" in Zechariah 14:17. As the literal rain refreshes the mown grass, so a rain of blessing will refresh the withered hopes of mankind.—Psalm 72:6-9; Acts 3:19.

⁵⁹We know of no scriptures which state that all dying will cease immediately throughout the earth as soon as the kingdom is set up at Jerusalem. On the contrary Isaiah 2:2-4, Micah 4:1, 2, and Zechariah 14:16-19 state that the nations will have to go to Jerusalem for their blessings—not individually, but representatively, at least. "Ask and ye shall receive," will doubtless be the law in the age to come. All the blessings of restitution will be supplied in abundance, but will not be forced upon any.

⁶⁰From scriptures already quoted, and from many others, we have reason to expect that after the kingdom is established at Jerusalem its influence will rapidly radiate to the uttermost parts of the earth. How rapidly we are not informed, but with all the modern conveniences it should not take very long. Probably those of the righteous who will be carried through the great time of trouble will be dealt with first, before those in the graves will be brought forth. It does not seem unreasonable, therefore, to think that twenty-five years, possibly more, will pass before the awakening of the dead shall begin.

WHAT ABOUT THE TIME OF TROUBLE?

⁶¹Some may conclude that we are expecting a tranquil transfer from the present condition to the kingdom of Christ. We have no warrant from the Scriptures for such expectation. If we had but the present situation of the world to judge from, reason dictates that with the high-pressure tension throughout the world—politically, financially, religiously, fanatically and ignorantly—with the wheels of activity already grating and heated with the friction of selfishness and superstition, it would be impossible to make the great changes outlined in the Bible without clashes between the contesting parties, which must result in great trouble, distress and loss of life and property. However, the Word of God does not leave us any doubt about it. Isaiah 13:1-13; Joel 2:1-11; Psalm 46:7-10, and Matthew 24:21, 22 speak in no uncertain terms. The people of the world are not yet willing to acknowledge their inability to save themselves, or to accept the leadership of even Jehovah himself. God's power will be necessary. "I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."—Isaiah 13:11.

⁶²Recent inventions can be used for the destruction of life and property which almost makes one's blood curdle to think about. God will permit the destruction to go far enough to sober mankind by its very horror.

The exposing of unrighteousness in high places is preparing the people to take vengeance into their own hands, and great will be their wrath when once they start.

⁶³The French Revolution gives a picture of what a maddened people can do. The world held its breath in horror and sought to cover its eyes from the sickening sight. It took the French nation many years to recover from the shock. How long it will take the world to sober up after its debauch is not stated.

⁶⁴How much of all this will come to pass in 1926 is not stated. *At present* we do not find any definite date beyond 1926 indicated in the Scriptures. When the Bible Students found 1914 in the Bible they heralded it far and wide, but the Lord left the curtain down at that date until we had reached it. God set his seal upon 1914, and the work started that year is still going on. We find the date 1925-1926 clearly indicated in the prophetic outline, and the Lord has not lifted the curtain sufficiently for us to see distinctly beyond. We feel sure that he will set his seal upon that date as clearly as he did upon 1914, and he will then let us see beyond as soon and as far as will be good for us.

⁶⁵Let us learn from experiences of the past not to be too positive about details. We need have no worry. We know that God knows. So

'We'd rather walk with him by faith
Than to go alone by sight;
We'd rather go with him in the dark,
Than go alone in the light.'

⁶⁶Many of us may be called home during 1925 and 1926. Whether we shall be called, or whether Jehovah shall leave some of us here for a little further work, what does it matter? If we are faithful, we are just as acceptable and commendable on this side the vail, and just as sure of our reward. With such a glorious hope and the evidences all about us of the divine power and protection and leading, every consecrated heart should be inspired to put forth all the energy possible to complete the race victoriously. Let us go forth confidently, carrying high the banner of the King, proclaiming, "The Lord reigneth!" — Psalm 96:10; Isaiah 52:7, 8.

⁶⁷As we thus keep diligently at work, singing as we go, trusting in Jehovah for all things necessary, we will fortify our minds against the darts of the adversary and increase our own courage, and also be a greater encouragement to others.—Romans 16:20.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

In what respect is the Bible like an abandoned gold mine? ¶ 1-3.

What was one of the prominent features of the Law Covenant? ¶ 4-7.

What was the penalty for disobedience in connection with the Jubilee system of sabbaths? ¶ 8, 9.

Did God inform Moses that the jubilees were typical? How long were they to continue? What year is the last typical jubilee year? ¶ 10, 11.

Of what is the jubilee a type? When did it begin to count? ¶ 12-14.

What would be happening if the Jews were still observing their jubilees? ¶ 15, 16.

What may we reasonably expect for the near future? ¶ 17, 18.

Have the Jews paid the rental on their land in full up to next October? How was it collected? ¶ 19-21.

When was the collection demanded? When paid? ¶ 22-26.

How long a time is "seven times"? What time in the year did the "seven times" commence and end? ¶ 27-31.

How did the Columbus Convention come to be held in the latter part of July? Is there a connecting link between the convention and the Gentile times? ¶ 32-42.

How are present-day events connected with prophecy? When may we reasonably expect some special blessings to begin to go to the Gentiles? ¶ 43-45.

With what particularity does Jehovah seemingly take notice of the future? ¶ 46-47.

What is an apparent weakness of Bible Students relative to dates? What may we expect during 1925? ¶ 48-52.

In what condition is the world? What are some of the events of the future that we look for? ¶ 53, 54.

To whom does restitution first come? Is prosperity due to come to Palestine? ¶ 55-57.

When will disease and death begin to flee away? How will the people go to Jerusalem for their blessings? How soon may we begin to look for the general resurrection to start? ¶ 58-60.

Will there be a peaceable transfer of the kingdoms? Who are contesting for supremacy? ¶ 61.

What historic event shows us the horror to which a mad-dened people can resort? What may be the extent of another trouble should it come? ¶ 62, 63.

Can we be positive about details? What should be the condition of our own hearts as we face the experiences of the future? ¶ 64-67.

PRAYER-MEETING TEXT COMMENTS

TEXT FOR MARCH 18

"I have put my words in thy mouth."—Isaiah 51:16.

THE ambassador of the Lord is backed by all power, perfect wisdom, and boundless love. A realization of that fact should bring peace of mind, comfort, and joy. It is the will of God that this knowledge should gladden the heart.

Jehovah is planting a new invisible power by which man shall be ruled, and which rule will be in righteousness. He intends to lay the foundation of an earthly government or visible rule for man. This also must be in righteousness. He has committed some of the work in connection with this great arrangement to his Church, the Body of Christ. The last members of the Church this side the veil are to have a part to perform in this wonderful work. The work to be done by the remnant this side the veil is that of being witnesses for God to one another and to the world. This work of witnessing is now being done, and will soon be fully accomplished. While doing this work, the members of the Church are fully and completely protected because covered by the shadow of God's hand. This means that his power is over them and exercised in their behalf.

All the anointed ones who have a zeal for the work of the Lord will be comforted now, because they realize that they are in the power of Jehovah. This brings to them such peace of mind that they can not refrain from singing the praises of Jehovah and the Lord Jesus.—1 Peter 2:9.

No one else could expect the complete protection and comfort from the Lord at this time except those who faithfully perform their duties as his witnesses. The importance of engaging in the Lord's service and of doing it joyfully can not be overstated. If we enter into the very spirit of the Master, and realize that the kingdom being established is God's kingdom and that we are a part of it by his grace, this will bring great comfort of heart, peace of mind, and real joy in the Lord.

TEXT FOR MARCH 25

"How beautiful . . . are the feet of him . . . that publisheth salvation."—Isaiah 52:7.

THE devoted ambassadors of Christ are receiving comfort from Jehovah and the Lord Jesus through the ministration of the holy spirit. By reason thereof they are developing into comforters of others, even those of the world, by bringing to them the message of the Lord and holding up to the people the standard of his righteous government.

The mass of mankind desire peace and salvation. Many false schemes are brought forth to blind mankind. There is but one way that leads to peace and salvation, and that is the Lord's way. There is only one class of people on the earth declaring this way, and these are they who are here described as the feet of Christ, the last members on earth. These are the ones whom the Lord has put on watch to safeguard the interests of his kingdom. In obedience to his command, they lift up their voices together and sing the Lord's praises by telling the people that lasting peace and salvation will come to the world through the kingdom of God, now at hand.

These faithful feet members are harbingers of real good news; yea, they bring the same message that the angels of heaven were permitted to mention at the birth of the Babe at Bethlehem. For long centuries the people have waited for this good news. Behold, now it is here. Those who are declaring it are beautiful in the sight of the Lord. It is written of the Lord Jesus that he is the fairest of ten thousand and altogether lovely. His feet members here are described as beautiful because they have his spirit, hence his likeness. To be thus honored is the greatest of all honors conferred upon earthly creatures. We will show our appreciation of this honor and our love for the Lord by earnestly and zealously availing ourselves of every opportunity to advertise the King and his kingdom.

OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION

—MARCH 15—JOHN 20:1-18—

JESUS WAS REALLY DEAD—JESUS RAISED TO DIVINE NATURE—JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS RESURRECTION.

"The Lord is risen indeed."—Luke 24:34.

IT WAS about 3 o'clock on Friday afternoon when Jesus died. He was buried before 6 o'clock, because the day which then began was the sabbath and a special day. It was also the sabbath which began the feast of Passover (Exodus 12:16), and neither the day nor themselves must be defiled by the unburied bodies of the three men crucified. The rulers were in so great hurry to get Jesus out of the way that they could not wait until after the feast before attempting his death.

²When the end came Joseph of Arimathæa, who was a secret disciple of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Nicodemus also went to the tomb with many spices. Both these timid disciples now came boldly forward; the injustice and the cruelty of their fellow members of the Sanhedrin, and the calm spirit of Jesus, decided them to associate themselves with him. They were late, but God was gracious to them in giving them this last opportunity of service. It was in a new rock-hewn tomb which Joseph had prepared for himself that the body of Jesus was placed, after it had been hurriedly though carefully attended to by his mother and the women of Galilee who followed him, and by Joseph and Nicodemus. All this was according to the Scriptures. Bishop Lowth's translation of Isaiah 53:9 is: "He shall be with the wicked in his death, and make his grave with the rich."

³The next day the leaders of the Jews went to Pilate to say that this man had said he would rise again on the third day, and that they feared lest his disciples should endeavor to fulfill their Master's words by taking the body away. They had no fear that the disciples could produce the man alive, but they did fear an empty tomb. They asked Pilate therefore to set a seal and a guard at the tomb to prevent any such happening. Pilate agreed, and a company of Roman soldiers was set as a guard, and a seal was placed on the great tombstone.

JESUS WAS REALLY DEAD

⁴Without doubt the Jews now congratulated themselves as having put their hated enemy, whom they both despised and feared, out of the way, and that the disturbance in Israel which had been felt for the past three years, and which threatened their position and authority, was at an end. They had no expectation of trouble in disposing of the disciples.

⁵The Son of God was dead and buried. On that fact of his death the whole of God's plan depends; for the death of the man Jesus was the realization of the ransom price for the salvation of the human family. With shame it has to be acknowledged that

the dogmas of Christendom have vitiated this phase of the truth of redemption and the plan of God.

⁶If we are to understand the Bible, we must let it speak for itself. The Scriptures themselves assert that Jesus poured out his soul (his life) unto death (Isaiah 53:12); that the corresponding price for human redemption was not Jesus' suffering unto death—it was his blood, his life, which provided it. (1 Timothy 2:6; Ephesians 1:7) Without question the Scriptures always speak of the death of the person Jesus and never of the death of his body as a part of himself, or apart from the soul or spirit.

⁷In other words, the Scriptures show that when Jesus died on the cross it was not merely that his body died but that he died. In the same way the Scriptures always speak of the resurrection of the person, the being, Jesus, and never of the resurrection of his body (e.g., Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:4). If Jesus did not really die, it follows there was no real resurrection out of death.

⁸Following this vitally wrong teaching, that it was only the body of Jesus which died, it follows that the only idea of resurrection which they can hold is the reunion of his supposedly undying spirit and his dead body, an error which of necessity led to the further error making Jesus forever partly man and partly God.

JESUS RAISED TO DIVINE NATURE

⁹The teaching of ecclesiastics limits both the power of God and the glory of the risen Lord. Knowing the truth of the resurrection saves us from the foolishness of thinking of Jesus as having a human body in the spirit world, the only material thing there. Had he such a body he could not be in the likeness of God and be the express image of God's person.—Hebrews 1:3.

¹⁰Rightly seen, it is clear there could be no good purpose served by the resurrection of Jesus' human body and in making it immortal. It would mean that the Son of God, who was to have all power in heaven and in earth, must forever be limited by that material body. That these same ecclesiastics hold that death frees a man from his body to give him greater liberty is one of Christendom's usual contradictions.

¹¹Discarding the traditions of men and taking the Scriptures for our guide, we find light in respect to God's purpose towards Christ and towards men through him. He who was put to death in the flesh, that he might be a ransom, was raised in spirit that he might become a redeemer in power. (1 Peter 3:18) It is clear then that the resurrection of Jesus was in no sense like the resuscitation of those whom Jesus had raised from death.

¹²The resurrection of Jesus is therefore God's evidence that he can raise the person from the dead, though thousands of years have elapsed; for the body is not in the question. God has his record of the mind and character of all who have had the breath of life; and in the resurrection he will give to each such body as it pleases him—to some a spiritual body, but to mankind in general a body of flesh and blood. The resurrection of Jesus also is a demonstration that he is the Son of God with power. (Romans 1:4) By it God has given assurance to all men of a resurrection from the dead, and the promise of a judgment to come (Acts 17:31); and by it also God has demonstrated the full and final victory over all the power of his enemies.

JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS RESURRECTION

¹³It was on the morning of the third day, the first day of the week, that Jesus was raised. How early we do not know. When the faithful women went there very early, the grave was open, and the men who had been set to watch the tomb had gone away. The women found to their surprise angels guarding the tomb, who said to them: "He is not here, but is risen." (Luke 24:6) They were directed to go to the disciples and to remind them of what Jesus had said to them when he was in Galilee, and that the Lord would go before them into Galilee. (Mark 16:7) All except Mary Magdalene hastened to find the disciples, to tell them the strange news, and to carry the angel's message. But Mary lingered, and the Lord appeared to her. She would have delayed him; but no words passed save those of recognition. Jesus immediately left her; and ere the others had been able to get to where the disciples were, he met them, manifesting himself to them.—Matt. 28:9.

¹⁴Later that day he appeared to the apostles, as well as to some others. There was no question to them that his word was fulfilled. Their loved Master was alive. They could not understand his manner towards them; but, with the exception of Thomas (who was away), they knew that their Master was not held by the power of death. God had delivered Jesus from death, as promised: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."—Psalm 16:10.

¹⁵Of the five appearances of Jesus on that day (namely, to Mary, the women, the two disciples on the way to Emmaus with whom he walked many miles, to Peter, and to the ten), he was not known by anyone until he manifested himself. When he appeared to the company of disciples at night, he was suddenly present with them without admission, the doors being locked for fear of the Jews. It is evident that our Lord had no material body as a necessary part of his being, but that he had a spirit organism, and also had the power to assume bodies of flesh of different form, just as he might choose, employing the power used of old by him and by other angels who were messengers from

God. The fact of the empty tomb can not mean Jesus had taken his human body again. Apparently, if left there, it would have been an insurmountable difficulty to the disciples' faith. God therefore removed it as it pleased him.

¹⁶Christendom, so-called, claims that the empty tomb is the final proof of the resurrection of the body of Jesus, and that there could be no acceptance of a declaration of his resurrection unless the tomb were empty. We reply: The empty tomb was necessary to the purpose of God in the resurrection of Jesus, but it was not at all necessary to his resurrection. The body had served its purpose as a tabernacle for his earthly ministry and as a sacrifice, his perfect human life being the correspondence with Adam's.

¹⁷The resurrection of Jesus was, in fact, the beginning of a new creation; and he was the first born from the dead. (Colossians 1:18) That new creature whom God raised out of death had its beginning at Jordan. He is now the Lord of life; and particularly he is the Head of a new creation which is being raised to the divine nature. Each footstep follower of Jesus, as he completes his life journey, dying in the likeness of his Master, is ready to be raised to the same divine plane of glory.

¹⁸The time of life for the Church began at Pentecost. It still continues. When the life of Christ has ceased to operate to the bringing forth of these new creatures who are to share with him in his resurrection, it will begin to work its blessings amongst men. The living will be taught the ways of righteousness, and the dead will be called forth from the tomb in due order, until all ransomed humanity will have seen and felt the power of God in the resurrection of Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

- Why were the rulers anxious about a hurried burial of those who had been crucified? ¶ 1.
- Who were Joseph and Nicodemus, and what did they do? ¶ 2.
- What was the request the leaders made of Pilate the next day? Did they now think that their position was secure? ¶ 3, 4.
- Did Jesus really die? Why then is it taught that Jesus did not really die? ¶ 5.
- Is there a difference between the death of a person and that of his body? What is the death of a person? ¶ 6, 7.
- If Jesus did not die as a person, show the inconsistency of a resurrection based upon the thought of his already possessing immortality? ¶ 8-10.
- How must Jesus be raised from the dead in order to be the Redeemer? Of what was his resurrection a manifestation? ¶ 11.
- Is the buried body taken into consideration as a necessary part of the resurrection? Of what is Jesus' resurrection a token? ¶ 12.
- To whom did Jesus show himself on the day of his resurrection? How was it possible for him to show himself in different ways and be unrecognizable by his friends? ¶ 13-15.
- How does "Christendom" view this matter? ¶ 16.
- When is the new life started and when is it completed? When God finishes the selection of the new creation, what will be the work that shall then stretch out before mankind? ¶ 17, 18.

THE FORTY DAYS AND THE ASCENSION

—MARCH 22—LUKE 24:13-53—

JESUS MANIFESTS HIS RESURRECTION—RECOGNIZED BY WHAT HE DID—PETER IS REINSTATED—JESUS AGAIN INVISIBLY PRESENT.

"Ye are witnesses of these things."—Luke 24:48.

OUR study today is of the words and doings of Jesus during the period of forty days between his resurrection and his ascension. (See Acts 1:3.) No explanation is given why this length of time must elapse. Clearly it is not necessary that the disciples should know; but we can not be wrong if we should inquire what we may learn. There are records of eleven occasions on which Jesus showed himself during that time; but it is impossible to be certain of their order. On the day of his resurrection Jesus appeared five times, as stated in our last lesson. (See John 20:14-17; Matthew 28:9,10; Luke 24:13-31, 33,34; John 20:19-23.) A week later he appeared to the eleven. (John 20:26-29) Then on a certain mountain in Galilee he met with them all. (Matthew 28:16-20) He showed himself on the lake side to some of the disciples who had spent a night fishing. (John 21:4-13) Later he appeared to five hundred brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15:6), afterwards to James (1 Corinthians 15:7), and at last to the eleven, when he led them to Bethany and, giving them his blessing, was parted from them. (Luke 24:50,51) Thus five of the eleven manifestations were on the first day, and the other six were during the remaining six weeks.

JESUS MANIFESTS HIS RESURRECTION

²No doubt the more numerous manifestations of the first day were intended to fix the fact of Jesus' resurrection in the minds of the disciples, and the prolonged time was to fix the first impressions beyond possible doubt. The last manifestation was when the disciples were together at Bethany and he gave them his parting blessing. His manner of leaving them left no possibility of doubt in the minds of his beloved followers. They returned to Jerusalem with much joy.—See John 14:28.

³It is to be noted that in no case was Jesus perceived or known until he manifested himself. (Acts 10:40,41) Rightly understood and interpreted in the light of the plan of God, this can mean no other than that in appearance Jesus was not the same as when he was with the disciples in the flesh. Mary thought that she spoke to the gardener; the two disciples with whom he walked several miles and sat down at meat did not know him. That night in Jerusalem he entered without any admittance into the room where the disciples were, an act impossible to a material body; and he left the room as he had entered it.

⁴Since the resurrected Jesus was not seen by any but by those to whom he manifested himself, it is clear that the witness of his resurrection was intended only for those who were in harmony with him, those who wanted to know and to do the will of God.

⁵There are lessons to be learned from the manner of Jesus' approach to his disciples. It might have been expected that Jesus would pay first attention to his disciples as a company. He did not do so. It does not seem unreasonable that the disciples, who as a company had left him in his hour of trial (for "they all forsook him and fled", and were not even near to help at his burial), should not have so early a favor as those who had been more faithful and loyal. Of the faithful ones Mary Magdalene seems to have been most energetic in her loving devotion. She was at the tomb the earliest, but was followed quickly by the other women. It was to Mary Magdalene that Jesus spoke his first word. Next, the other women were favored; then the two evidently very earnest disciples who, perhaps, were not so afraid of being seen as the other disciples. Peter came next; and then, when at dark the disciples had gathered together and had locked the doors, Jesus appeared to them.

RECOGNIZED BY WHAT HE DID

⁶What happened on Jesus' appearance to Peter we are not told; probably the Lord gave him assurance that his terrible lapse on the night of the betrayal was not to be a barrier to his discipleship. The appearance to James, Jesus' brother, was probably the turning point of his life. He had not believed in Jesus, but later he became the leader of the Church in Jerusalem. (Acts 15:13; Galatians 1:19) Nothing is related as to what Jesus said to the disciples who met him on the mountain in Galilee. As he appeared, most of them acknowledged him at once; but some doubted—a proof that each appearance differed from the others. The Lord seems to have left them without further instructions, and waiting under these circumstances must have been very trying to them.

⁷Peter and six others were together; and being so near the scenes of his youth and early manhood, feeling the call for activity he said: "I go a fishing." (John 21:3) Most men are glad for a lead in times of uncertainty, and there seemed to these men that there could be nothing specially wrong in spending a night fishing while waiting. We need not think that this move on their part indicated desire to return to their former manner of life, or that they were tired of waiting on their Master. However, they would have done better to wait, since their Master had given them no lead. Probably they did not intend to spend more than the one night in fishing; their danger was in that they might have had success and have been tempted thereby to continue.

⁸They spent the night fishing, but caught nothing, though to catch nothing during a night's fishing was not a new experience. (Luke 5:5) In the morning as they were coming to land, a stranger on the shore called to them as if inquiring what catch they had had. On hearing that they had taken nothing, he called to them to cast in their net on the right side. This they did, in response to his request. Immediately their net was full of fishes. John said to Peter: "It is the Lord" (John 21:7); and Peter immediately jumped into the water to go to him. They found the Lord already cooking for them.

PETER IS REINSTATED

⁹After the meal there occurred one of the best known and most touching incidents of our Lord's life. Before Peter's denial he was the foremost apostle, and he had not yet been restored. His denial was a bad break for one who should have been a caretaker of the flock.

¹⁰Now after they had eaten, Jesus called Peter aside and said: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Jesus did not address him as Peter, but by his old name Simon; for Peter means "rock" and he had not proved worthy of the name. Peter avowed his love. Again the Lord put the question, but dropped the comparison. And Peter again avowed his love, saying that the Lord knew it. Again the question came, and Peter was grieved. Again he avowed his love. He could do no more; he could only add that the Lord, who knew all things, knew that he loved Him. Then the Lord now for the third time said: "Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17) Thrice Peter had denied the Lord after having declared in the presence of his brethren that though they all should deny him he would not. (Matthew 26:35) Thrice now the Lord questioned him as if his sincerity needed probing. Peter would not now avow that his love was greater than the other disciples; for he had learned his frailty and would now understand by the Lord's thrice repeated "feed my sheep" that he was restored to his former place, and that he was to be a shepherd, a caretaker of the Lord's sheep.

¹¹Though Jesus was not yet exalted to his high place of power and had not received the holy spirit to give to his disciples, yet in a measure he gave the holy spirit to them, breathing on them and saying, "Receive ye the holy spirit," by which their eyes were opened that they might understand the Scriptures. Also he gave them both a commission to preach amongst all nations and authority in the Church. (Luke 24:45, 47; John 20:23) They were to be his witnesses sent abroad in all the earth by him even as his Father had sent him. The forty days were therefore a time of endowment and of learning, the intermediary stage between their human experiences with him and those which would come when the holy spirit endued them with power from on high.

JESUS AGAIN INVISIBLY PRESENT

¹²On the fortieth day the Lord led the disciples out to Bethany. He told them they were to be his witnesses to carry on the work he had come from heaven to begin. Without doubt time is a factor in development of understanding, and it is evident that time was necessary for the disciples. After his last appearance they were men well set in purpose, earnestly waiting for the promised blessing; and when Pentecost came, they were ready for that greatest of all blessings which God has for his people—the power of his holy spirit given through his Son.

¹³The disciples were to represent Jesus and also the Father through him. By the holy spirit they would show in their lives the power of the grace of God to keep them from the world in righteousness and true holiness of life, and in power to witness to the fact that the hope for the world was in the return of him whom the world had slain, but who was its God-appointed Savior.

¹⁴The experience of the disciples during the forty days has a measure of correspondency with that of the Church during the present time, more particularly during the first years of the *Parousia*, the years 1878 to 1918. Both were transition periods. And as then some found difficulty in understanding the changed relationship of the Lord to his former manner of life—he was present, yet apart—so now some find difficulty in understanding the position of the Lord in relation to his return from heaven. They say: "How can he be present in the earth in any way other than previously?" Some, readier than others to take the evidences that his word was fulfilled, gained the clearer vision. But the years 1919 and onward have brought such clear evidences of the Lord's return that now the disciples are like their brethren of old after the ascension, filled with joy, yet waiting for the greater blessing soon to come. They know that he has returned, not in name only, but in fact and in deed.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

- What period of time does our study cover? How many times did Jesus reveal himself to his disciples after his resurrection? Name them. ¶ 1.
- Why were there so many appearances the first day? When was the last appearance? ¶ 2.
- Did the disciples know Jesus by his physical appearance? Did Jesus have a material resurrection? ¶ 3.
- To whom did Jesus manifest himself? To whom did he first show himself? ¶ 4, 5.
- With whom did Jesus meet of which nothing is recorded? ¶ 6.
- What might have given great temptation to the apostles on their fishing trip? What was the final result? ¶ 7, 8.
- What touching experience did Peter have? Why did Jesus not address him as Peter? ¶ 9, 10.
- What was the commission given to the apostles? ¶ 11.
- From where did the ascension take place? What is the greatest blessing for the people of God? ¶ 12.
- What does the holy spirit do for the disciple? What is a fundamental prerequisite to discerning the Lord's presence now? ¶ 13, 14.

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Brantford, Ont.	" 19	Dunnville, Ont.	" 29
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Bay Minette, Ala.	" 9	Fulton, Miss.	" 19, 20
Mobile, Ala.	" 10, 11	Columbus, Miss.	" 22
Deer Park, Ala.	" 12	West Point, Miss.	" 23

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Madill, Okla.	" 8	Wynnewood, Okla.	" 15
Hickory, Okla.	" 9	Paoli, Okla.	" 16
Ada, Okla.	" 10	Noble, Okla.	" 17
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Sonora, Ky.	" 12	Evansville, Ind.	" 22
Elizabethtown, Ky.	" 13	Owensboro, Ky.	" 23
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Bend, Ore.	" 4, 6	Pendleton, Ore.	" 18
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